

# DCS Ombudsman Bureau Overview

Department of Child Services Interim Study Committee

*Susan Hoppe, Director  
DCS Ombudsman Bureau*

# History

- Created in 2009 by IC 4-13-19 to provide independent oversight of DCS
- Ombudsman assumed duties 12/14/2009
- Agency became operational January 2010
- Annual Reports submitted for 2010 and 2011
- Staff
  - 2010 Part time assistant
  - 2012 Full time assistant (Intake/Investigator); recently hired another assistant

# Authority (IC 4-13-19-5)

- To receive, investigate/resolve complaints alleging DCS failed to protect or failed to follow laws, rules and written policies
- To provide recommendations when problems are identified
- To request a response to the recommendation within a reasonable time
- Other
  - *Periodic review of relevant policies and procedures with a view toward safety and child well being*
  - *Recommend changes in procedures for investigating reports of AB/N and overseeing the welfare of children who are under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court.*
  - *Make the public aware of the services of the DCS Ombudsman Bureau*

# Ombudsman Services and Levels of Responses

- **Provide Information and/or Referrals**

*Telephone and email generated*

*Responded to 516 inquiries during 2011*

- **Assist**

*Telephone and email generated*

- **Review**

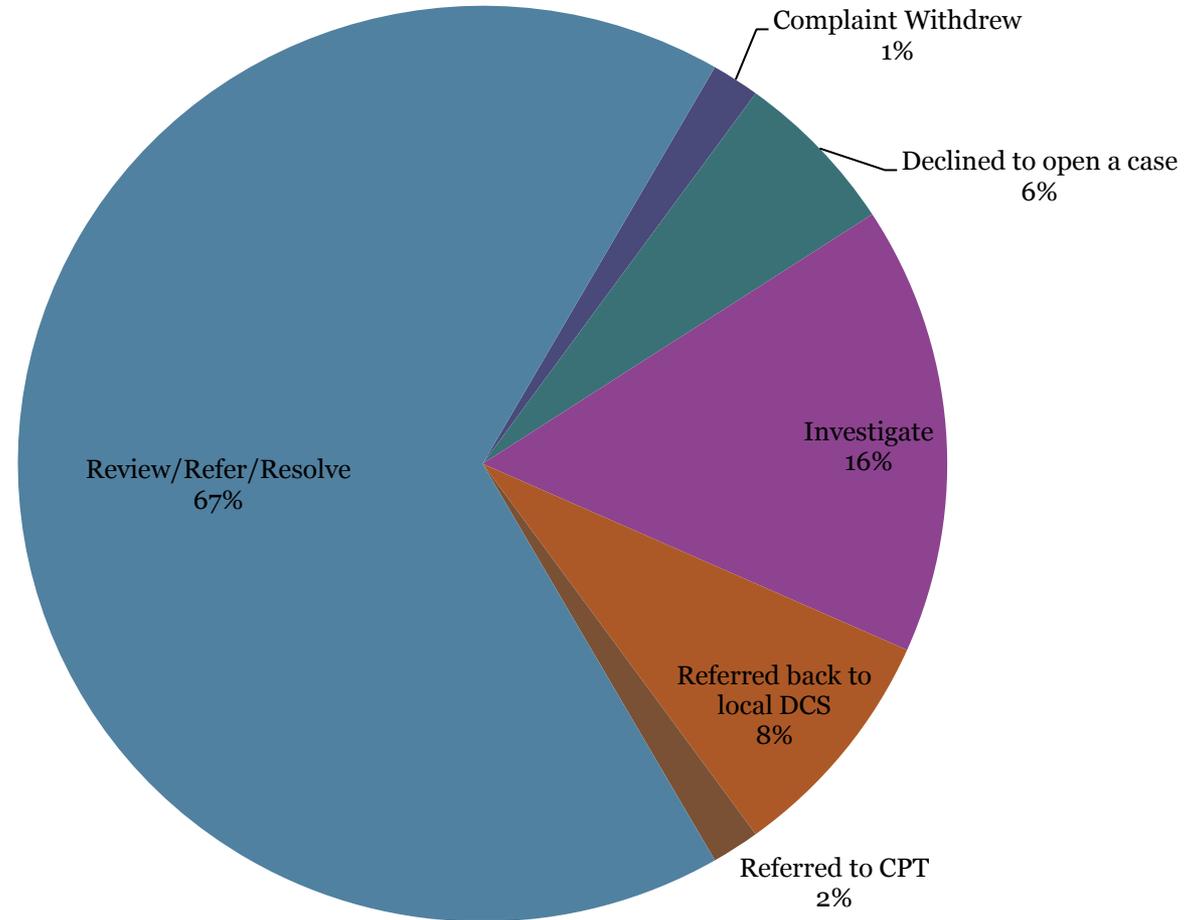
*Requires a written complaint form*

- **Investigate**

*Requires a written complaint form*

- **Other**

## 2011 Responses to Complaints (120 Total)



# Findings

Findings are determined in some reviews and all investigations

## ***Validity Designations***

- ***Merit***
- ***Non Merit***
- ***Both Merit and Non Merit***

*During 2011 of the cases that were given a validity determination (64), 6% had merit, 25% had multiple allegations that included both merit and non-merit determinations, and 69% of the allegations did not have merit.*

# Recommendations

## **Case Specific**

*Provided when a complaint is determined to have merit*

- Modify, cancel or reconsider an action
- Develop a plan to ensure compliance in the future

## **General Recommendations**

*Provided quarterly based on observations of recurring issues*

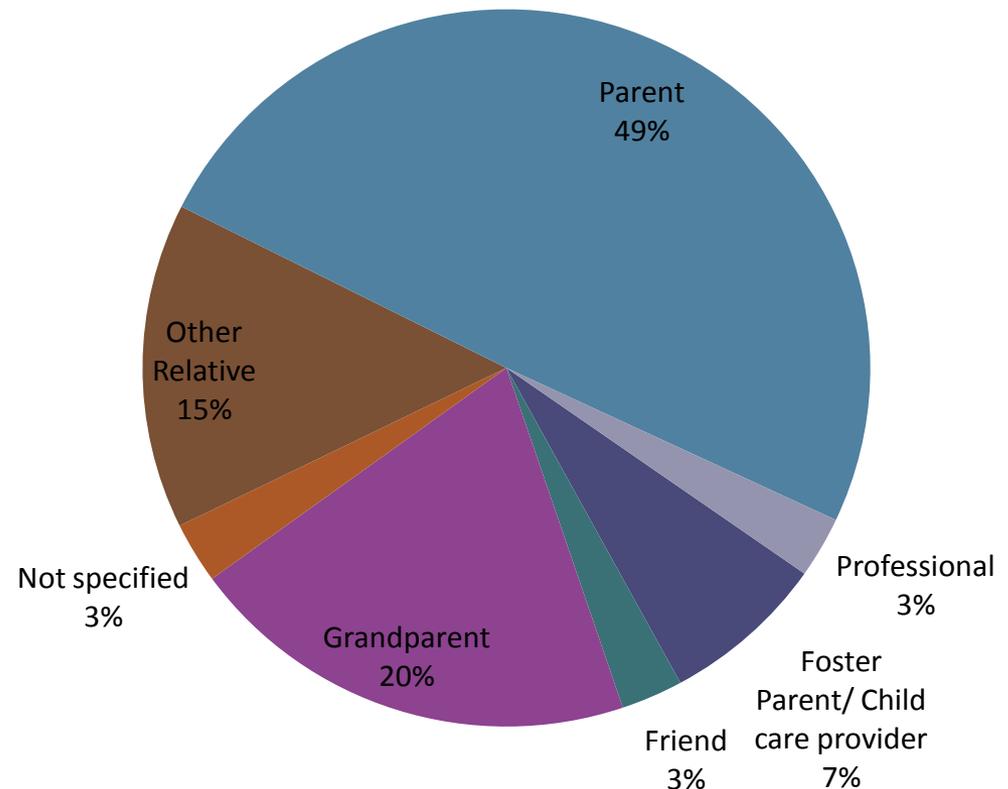
- Revise, reconsider, or clarify a policy or practice

# Who Complains...

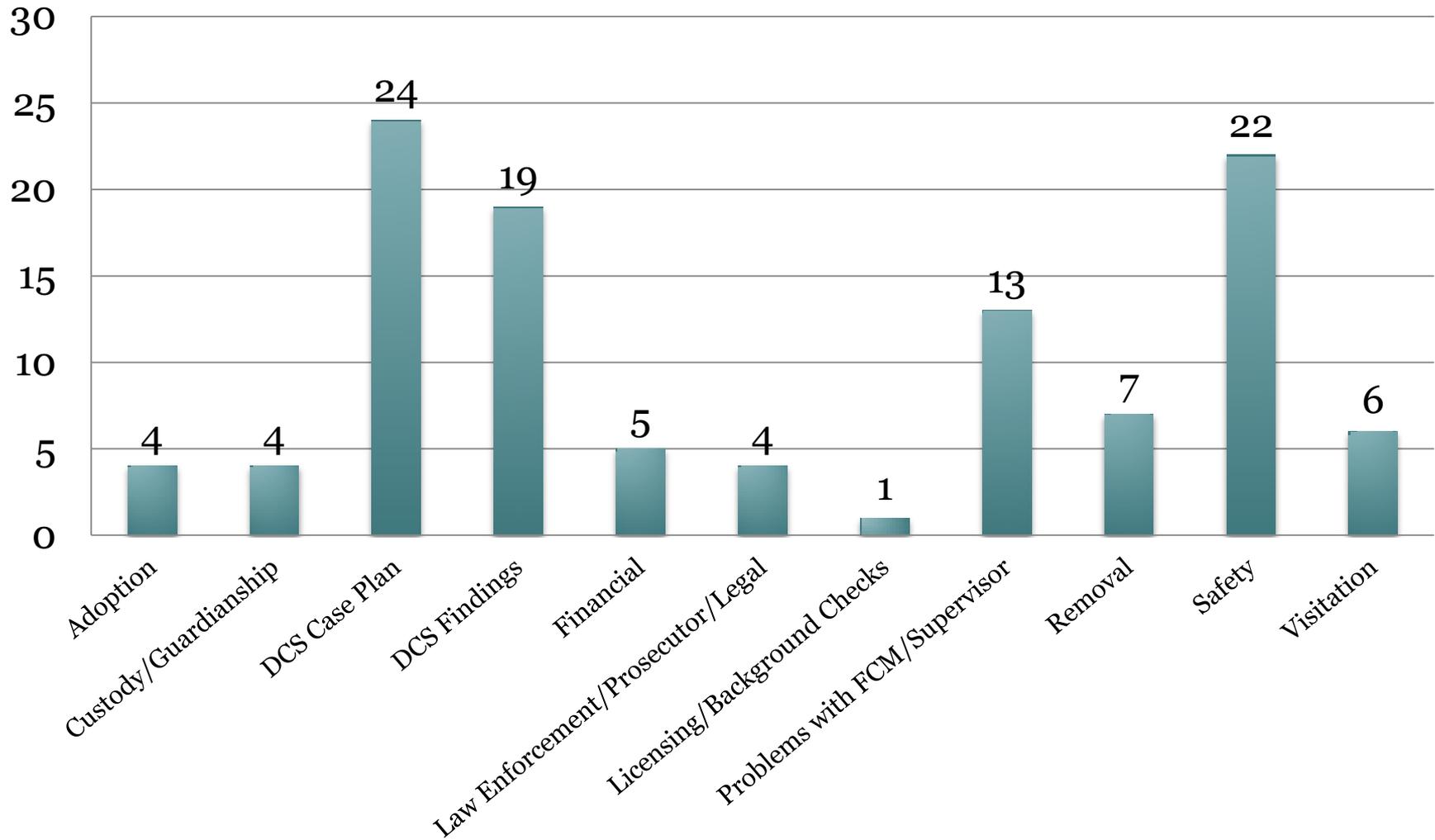
- Parents
- Grandparents
- Relatives
- Friends
- Foster Parents/  
Caregivers
- Professionals
- Other/Unknown

NOTE: Pursuant to IC 4-13-19-7 (3) except as necessary to investigate and resolve a complaint, the identity of the complainant will not be disclosed without the complainant's written consent or a court order. The complainant is provided the opportunity to give written consent on the complaint form.

## Complaint Source 2011



## 2011 Major Complaint Topics



# Mission

*To effectively respond to complaints concerning DCS actions by providing problem resolution services and independent case reviews and to provide recommendations to improve DCS service delivery and promote public confidence*

## Guiding Principles

- A healthy family and supportive community serve the best interest of every child.*
- Independence and impartiality characterizes all Bureau practices and procedures.*
- All Bureau operations reflect respect for parents' interest in being good parents and DCS professionals' interest in implementing best practice.*

## Contact Us

DCS Ombudsman Bureau  
Indiana Department of Administration  
402 W Washington Room W479  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204  
Local: (317) 234-7361  
Toll Free: (877) 682-0101  
Fax: (317) 232-3154

[DCSOmbudsman@idoa.in.gov](mailto:DCSOmbudsman@idoa.in.gov)  
[www.IN.gov/IDOA/2610.htm](http://www.IN.gov/IDOA/2610.htm)





# Indiana Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline

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To make a report of Child Abuse or Neglect call:

**1-800-800-5556**

All Indiana citizens are mandatory reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect.